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ABSTRACT

Intended to help students develop into discerning and perceptive theater audience members, this curriculum guide seeks to promote a course of study in which each and every student becomes aware of the world around them and how the arts, and specifically theater, are a reflection of and a comment on the world. It includes goals, objectives, activities, and evaluation techniques that may be used in developing both junior high and high school courses that will foster an appreciation and understanding of theater. Following an introduction, philosophy statement, list of goals and general objectives, and a scope and sequence chart, the guide presents six units of study: (1) Dramatic Literature; (2) Theater History; (3) Theater Theory; (4) Elements of Performance; (5) Theater Appreciation; and (6) Self. Within each unit of study, various goals are outlined, learner outcomes and evaluation techniques are suggested, a teacher's self-assessment form is provided, a short bibliography is included, and several sample activities are included which pertain to the specific topic area. A bibliography lists theater organizations in North Dakota as well as publishers of plays and musicals. A theater perusal script inventory is attached. (SR)

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Drama

Curriculum Guide

7-12

NORTH DAKOTA ARTS CURRICULUM PROJECT

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NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead, SUPERINTENDENT
BISMARCK, 1991

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NORTH DAKOTA
DRAMA CURRICULUM GUIDE
7-12

Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead, Superintendent
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction
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FOREWORD

Theatre has been and will continue to be defined in a variety of ways. When a distillation process is used on those various definitions we are left with a mere four elements which are absolutely essential to each theatrical event: the actor, the audience, the space, and the immediate communication between actor and audience. Many other elements, from formal script to scenic designer, have over the years become recognized as traditional elements of theatre. Yet, when all is said and done, theatre is little more than the art of impersonation on a stage (or a reasonable facsimile), in front of a live audience.

John Hirsch, a well-known director from Winnipeg who later served as resident director at Lincoln Center and for the Stratford Festival, defined theatre in this way:

> Theatre is for me an ongoing illumination of man, his problems, his dreams, his visions, the society which lifts him and his relationship to God. This is what theatre is about, always has been about. It is also a celebration, communally, of the values which a society holds. To be truly human has to be learned, and has to be relearned over and over again. And one of the places where we learn about being human is in the theatre.[1]

The study of theatre is much more than a study of its component parts. It is a study of what it is to be human, how that humanity is dissected and communicated in the theatrical form, and how we, as humans, respond to the art form. The study of theatre should be both the study of the creative and interpretive work of the artists involved, as well as the study of the vicarious experiences of the audience watching the theatrical event unfold. Too often we get sidetracked in our study of theatre, electing to focus on the work of the artists and forgetting to learn about one of the most important elements--the audience.

This curriculum guide is designed not so much as a tool to train future theatre practitioners, but to teach to each student the art of appreciating the theatre--a role which each and every student can play for the rest of his or her life.

Wayne G. Sanstead

Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead
Superintendent of Public Instruction

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[1] Bartow, Arthur. The Director's Voice: Twenty-One Interviews. New York, NY, Theatre Communications Guild, 1988, p. 161.

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In 1984, the North Dakota Council on the Arts undertook the task of writing curriculum guides for each of the areas under the arts. This writing encompasses five areas--creative writing, dance, music, theater, and visual arts. Appreciation is given to Vern Goodin and Lila Hauge of the North Dakota Council on the Arts for their professional guidance in directing this project.

Special thanks to Dan Plato of the University of North Dakota for his work as senior writer and to the original committee members who first met and discussed the possibilities of a theatre curriculum guide designed specifically for North Dakota junior high and high school students. A special thanks is owed to Richard A. Barbie, Bismarck Public Schools and Roger Kalinowski, Wahpeton High School, for their review of the guide and for Barbie's compilation of plays for teachers and students to peruse. In addition, appreciation is extended to those who helped review the guide and to those teachers who attempted to make use of it.

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Plato has received several grants over the past ten years to work with the implementation of children's theatre, creative dramatics, and theatre games into primary and secondary education. He has also directed dozens of productions, acted in many more, and is the playwright of Medea Myth. Plato is an active member of Educational Theatre Association (for which he is a regional board member), Association for Theatre in Higher Education, and the American College Theatre Festival.

Charles DeRemer
Director of Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

For teachers seeking a guide to help them in the extracurricular activity of mounting the school play, or for those seeking help in developing an acting class for the high school student, I would advise them to look elsewhere. This guide is not intended as a source for theatre-making as much as for theatre appreciation. It focuses on the needs of all students to develop into discerning and perceptive audience members.

This guide seeks to help the teacher who wishes to foster for all students an appreciation and understanding of the theatre event through the studies of audience, dramatic literature, theatre history and theory, and by looking at and learning about the various theatre artists from an audience's point of view.

From the original meeting sponsored by the North Dakota Council of the Arts several mandates about this guide developed. First and foremost it was agreed that a need for such a guide existed and that this guide should "dare to be different" in its approach. Elementary and college teachers have a vast amount of materials available to them in helping them design creative dramatics or theatre courses for their students. The same is not so true for the junior high and high school teachers who are attempting to teach theatre and drama. By the time students reach the secondary system of education, theatre has been placed on the extracurricular activities list (if it is in the schools at all) and thought by most to be merely "something fun to do after school." If any course is taught in the schools it usually is a beginning acting course, while little attempt is made to reach a broader base of students who have a curiosity to learn about the art form, but no desire to participate in its actual making. This guide, then, is specifically designed for the teacher hoping to reach those who will make up our audiences for years to come.

If a second mandate could be distilled from the discussions of that committee it would have to be in the area of removing theatre from the competitive arena (speech and one-act play contests), and having this guide encourage the participation of all students for continued self-development.

What follows is a guide which includes goals, objectives, activities and evaluation techniques that may be used in developing both junior high and high school courses that will foster an appreciation and understanding of theatre. Whether these ideas serve as the backbone of a totally new course or as supplemental material in an English or speech course matters not. What is most important is that we recognize the need for a course of study that includes each and every student becoming aware of the world around them and how the arts, and specifically theatre, are a reflection of and a comment on that world.

PHILOSOPHY

Theatre education in the junior high and high schools should begin to focus on a number of topics for a variety of reasons. Junior high and high school courses should introduce the concepts of theatre through:

the study of dramatic literature (with an emphasis on its relation to other forms of literature and with an understanding of its importance as a beginning step in the making of a theatrical event);

theatre history (with a strong emphasis on its relation to world history and sociological, religious, and scientific changes from society to society);

theatre theory (with emphases on its humanistic elements, its relation to other art forms--both how it draws on and differs from those various forms--and the elements that make up the theatrical event);

the various elements of performance (with more attention paid to an audience's understanding the various roles of playwright, actor, director, designer, etc., rather than learning the skills necessary to pursue one of these careers);

audience appreciation skills (attending to those skills which will make students discerning and appreciative audience members);

and the continued development of individuality, interpersonal communication skills, creative thinking and group communication skills (as begun in creative dramatics curriculums used in elementary programs).

Ultimately the study of theatre in junior high and high school should bring to the school day what is so often lost in curriculums: the desirability of individuality, the belief that there can be more than one right answer, the challenge to reach creative solutions, the encouragement to be bold in our choices and still be rewarded if our choices prove to lead in poor directions, the need for collaboration rather than competition, and the flexibility to tackle subject material for as long or as short as necessary before moving on to a new lesson plan--to abandon hopeless projects--to sidetrack when current events or a concept from another class would be best introduced--to make the class and its goals fit the students rather than the other way around.

GOALS AND GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The study of the various component parts of theatre should assist in achieving some of the following goals for junior high and high school students:

The study of dramatic literature:

- should help the student become more actively and imaginatively involved in the reading process, asking each to fill in the many questions left unanswered by the playwright
- should make the student more aware of all the various literary forms as comparisons are made between poetry and drama, novels and drama, and nonfiction and drama
- should help the student become more aware of the various techniques used by playwrights (as well as screenwriters) in putting together a script
- should make the student more aware of history and how the drama has served both to reflect upon and to rebel against the society for which it was written

While the study of theatre history in either junior high or high school would at best be very surface in its nature, even a very beginning understanding of this area may serve the following goals:

- increasing a student's appreciation of history by better understanding how society's artists responded to its own times
- helping the student to understand how society has viewed the theatre (from its religious roots in Ancient Greece to its total banning in various times in various countries)
- helping the student to learn how theatre customs and conventions have come into popular use, and why the audience expects and accepts those conventions
- helping the student to learn about various trends in theatre and drama that are a direct reflection of other sociological or religious events in history (for example: early realism as a reflection of Darwinism)

The study of theatre theory should achieve some or all of the following goals:

- helping the student understand the importance of theatre in our lives
- helping the student understand the communication process that occurs during the theatre event

- helping the student understand the unique nature of theatre--what makes it a separate art form

The study of the various elements that go into making a performance should be approached both from participatory and observatory viewpoints, resulting in the student achieving the following various goals:

- achieving an understanding and appreciation for the nature of both the creative and interpretive artists who have input in making the theatre event
- learning, or learning <u>about</u>, the various skills needed by each of the various theatre artists
- learning to recognize value in the work of theatre artists

The study of audience skills and audience appreciation should focus on some of the following skills:

- the development of "taste"--learning to discern, appreciate, and enjoy a variety of styles of theatre performances
- learning about the nature of live performance and the dynamics of communication during the live event
- the development of a personal point of view--learning to look and appreciate from one's own perspective
- the development of an awareness of aesthetics in theatre

Drawing upon those goals introduced in the K-6 drama curriculum guide, the study of theatre in grades 7-12 should continue to assist in achieving the following goals:

- the development of a positive self-image
- the extension of physical and vocal abilities
- the application of creative thinking to problem-solving situations
- the use of group communication and problem-solving skills
- the development of a positive nature toward new challenges and projects that require a student to take risks
- the demonstration of respect for others' choices, points-of-view, and unique approaches to the challenges set forth
- the ability to take and give constructive criticism

The goals of this curriculum guide include:

- serving as inspiration and source-book for teachers seeking to improve existing theatre courses or begin new courses in their schools
- serving as source for teachers in companion curriculum areas (such as speech and English) who wish to incorporate increased study of theatre in their areas
- broadening and strengthening the teachers' perceptions of the need for and the approach to teaching performance art and its appreciation
- assisting the teacher in finding available resources for the teaching of theatre
- providing example activities that may be adapted for various ages and classes

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE CHART

Most of the exercises included in this guide are intended for all grades from 7-12 with the understanding that each teacher will adapt them to fit the specific age groups he or she is dealing with at any given time. Most exercises can be repeated throughout those six years enabling a student to learn significantly more each time the exercise is repeated. Slight variations (whether they be in choice of plays, performances seen, or even partnerships within the class) will allow most exercises to have value in being repeated within the same year. Reviewing and repeating exercises, along with combining two or more exercises, should provide the student with valuable experience in enriching their fundamental theatre skills.

What follows is a basic outline which reflects the types of experiences which might be most beneficial for specific age groups:

Grades 7-9

1. Continuing the education process introduced in the K-6 Drama Curriculum Guide--focusing on creative dramatics exercises in improvisation, movement, sensory awareness, and playmaking
2. Developing basic skills of participation
3. Developing basic skills of appreciation/criticism
4. Introduction of appropriate literature
5. Continuing to use creative drama as a teaching tool in other subject areas
6. Possible performance opportunities (perhaps only within the classroom for each other or for other classrooms within the school)

Grades 10-12

1. Examination of theatre theory/theatre history (especially as it relates to other subject areas and topics)
2. Continued development of participatory skills
3. Continued development of appreciation/criticism
4. Significant increase in amount of literature studied and used in hypothetical or small-scale performances or scene study
5. Public performance

UNITS OF STUDY

This section of the book is organized by separating the various subject areas listed below. Within each subject area various goals are reiterated from the above philosophy and further outlined, learner outcomes and evaluation techniques are suggested, a teacher's self-assessment form is provided, and a short bibliography is included should the teacher wish to seek further guidance and/or related activities. Following these items, several sample activities are included which pertain to the specific topic area.

Each activity has the ability to stand alone. Few activities require that previous activities be absorbed. Sequence is equally unimportant. Teachers are encouraged to pick and choose, and alter at will, those activities which best suit their individual students and communities, and their ability to make use of available performances and resources.

I. DRAMATIC LITERATURE

II. THEATRE HISTORY

III. THEATRE THEORY

IV. ELEMENTS OF PERFORMANCE

V. THEATRE APPRECIATION

VI. SELF

UNIT I

DRAMATIC LITERATURE

Specific Goals and Objectives

The study of dramatic literature:

- should help the student become more actively and imaginatively involved in the reading process, asking each to fill in the many questions left unanswered by the playwright

  --develops student's imagination

  --introduces the student to the concept of drama as a "blueprint" of production rather than as a finished literary form

  --encourages student to see that drama permits great allowances in the reader's imaginative input

- should make the student more aware of all the various literary forms as comparisons are made between poetry and drama, novels and drama, and nonfiction and drama

  --comparisons of drama adapted from other forms help point out forms of dialogue, the use of time in drama, how character is developed in different ways, etc.

  --again, underlines how drama works as a mere beginning point for something greater while other forms of literature are in final stages

- should help the student become more aware of the various techniques used by playwrights (as well as screenwriters) in putting together a script

  --students should be able to recognize the use of various scriptwriting techniques such as exposition, conflict, character, climax, crisis, and denouement

  --students should be able to analyze the effective use of the above elements

  --students should be able to compare different author's techniques for including the above elements

- should make the student more aware of history and how the drama has served both to reflect upon and to rebel against the society for which it was written

  --through the study of major plays from different time periods, students can become more aware of historic issues, major historical figures, and how theatre both reflects upon and frequently changes these issues and people to fit the playwright's point of view

Learner Outcomes and Evaluation Techniques

In this area teachers should be able to use more traditional forms of evaluation as the student works with such skills and projects as group discussion, identification, research, writing, and both objective and subjective testing.

Still, teachers are encouraged to support students' varying opinions on interpretations of literature, especially when the student has worked to support his or her viewpoint. A tremendous number of scholars have found an equally tremendous number of ways of interpreting such plays as Hamlet. Rather than ask each student to come to agreement upon an understanding of a play, a teacher should seek to encourage well-thought-out differences of opinion.

The study of dramatic literature should arouse a student's curiosity--students should hope to visualize what has only been suggested in the script; they may wish to talk about the ways such a script might be mounted; they may seek to find a videotape or movie made from such a script to compare their ideas with those who have gone before them; they may even wish to move into a simulated process of mounting the production--starting set designs, fantasizing about ideal casting or casting from within the classroom, doing research on clothing, furnishings, and architecture of the play's time period, etc.

Students should also begin to be able to recognize value in various plays. While comparing a Shakespearian tragedy with a Neil Simon comedy is a little like comparing cherries with snowballs, such comparisons will always help to make the students more aware of the differences between great drama and less-than-great drama.

Perhaps the greatest outcome that a teacher can hope for from the study of dramatic literature, is that one or more students will express a desire to do additional play reading. Additional projects can be designed to foster student interest in pursuing additional scripts by a certain playwright or additional plays of a given time period.

Teacher's Self-Assessment

Following a unit of study on a specific play or set of plays a teacher is encouraged to ask the following self-directed questions:

1. Was the literature chosen appropriate for this age group?

2. Am I sure that all students read the play or plays and are at least able to identify the major elements of the work?

3. Did I encourage discussion that allowed more than one opinion on such issues as themes, character, conflict, climax, relative value of the script, etc.?

4. Did I find ways of including all students in discussions and activities?

5. Did I allow the discussions to develop out of the students' interests or did I force the discussion to go into preplanned areas?

6. Did I find ways to make the literature pertinent to current issues and problems that the students understand and care about?

7. Did I plan sufficient time to cover the play or plays adequately? Did we spend too much time going over the work?

8. Did I find new ways of exploring the play and its issues that interested the students? Were the activities helpful in learning about the play or did they become bothersome or boring to the students?

9. What new ways can I approach this or other plays the next time I want to explore dramatic literature in my classroom?

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Reaske, Christopher Russell. How to Analyze Drama. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966.

Scanlan, David. Reading Drama. Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing, 1988.

Wilson, Edwin. The Theatre Experience, 4th ed. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1988.

CONCEPT: Comprehending the notion of dramatic movement and tension in the composition of a script.

OBJECTIVES:

* Learning to recognize the tensions or conflicts in a script.
* Recognizing patterns in dramatic structure.
* Recognizing the relative importance of various scenes within a script.
* Learning to respond emotionally and record that emotional level.

MATERIALS:

* A play which all have read

PROCEDURES:

* Using a graph where the horizontal line represents time and the vertical line is a measure of dramatic tension, have students draw a graph that they feel best represents the movement of the script from beginning to end (this might be done either as a group or individual project).
* Compare graphs upon completion.

FEEDBACK:

* Repeat the activity with other scripts or literature (novels or short stories, even poems will allow this kind of analysis). Discuss the similarities between the various graphs.
* Encourage students to do their own graphs. This should be a representation of their own emotional journey. Each person will undoubtedly have their own response to each event within the play.
* Recognize both the similarities and differences from student to student. Have students discuss why they made the choices that they did.

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Have students repeat the exercise with several television situation comedies. Repeat with detective or murder mystery shows. Repeat with current popular movies. Discuss the trends recognized from graph to graph.

* Define the different moments which seem to occur in each graph (inciting incident, rising action, minor conflicts, crises, climax, and falling action or denouement).

CONCEPT: Rewording literature in a student's own words to better understand the playwright's intent and use of "poetry."

OBJECTIVES:

* Learning that playwriting is a skill much like that of writing poetry--that it means selecting each word very carefully for a full impact on the listening audience.

* Learning that word choice and syntax carry a great deal of hidden meaning.

MATERIALS:

* A play or scene that all students have read

PROCEDURES:

* After reading a play or scene (perhaps even Hamlet's famous soliloquy) have each student write a complete line by line paraphrase of the dialogue.

* Encourage them to be complete and to use words that they use in their everyday speech.

* Have students read aloud their versions of the dialogue.

* Discuss how word choice carries different meanings from the original dialogue to the paraphrased versions.

* Discuss how syntax alters the meaning.

* Discuss how character is revealed through word choice and syntax.

FEEDBACK:

* Several of the paraphrasings may be rather humorous. Encourage the laughter as long as it is not pointed at the person doing the paraphrasing.

* Encourage discussion as to why many of the paraphrases are inadequate in carrying the same amount of meaning as the original.

* With older students explore the difference of how the dialogue sounds. (Not only is the meaning different between "To be or not to be," and "Should I kill myself or not," but so is the melodic sound of the two phrases.)

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Have students who are working on an acting scene develop a completely paraphrased version of that scene. Perform both for the class. Discuss how the scene is altered by such a practice.

CONCEPT: Writing out the internal thoughts of the character, so as better to understand motivations and hidden meanings.

OBJECTIVES:

* Helping the student to understand that a playwright leaves much to the actors' imaginations--asking them to fill in many of the gaps with their creative imaginations.

* Helping the student to realize that frequently we cannot take everything that a character says as the complete truth.

* Learning about the characters' motivations--what drives them to do the things they do and say the things they say.

* Learning that how an actor chooses to interpret the thoughts of a character has much influence over how the final characterization evolves (and why one actor's performance of a role may be too different from another's).

MATERIALS:

* A play or scene that all students have read

PROCEDURES:

* After reading a play or scene have each student write a complete line by line thought flow for each character.

* Thoughts might include past scenes that these characters have shared ("The last time we talked . . ."), needs they have for the future ("I have to get out of here as soon as possible . . ."), observations they are making in the present ("Why is she looking at me like that?"), etc.

* Have students read aloud their versions of the characters' thoughts.

* Discuss the tremendous differences between the students' choices.

* Discuss the "rightness" of various thoughts over others.

* Discuss the common ground students shared.

* Repeat the exercise with another scene encouraging students to seek richer inner thought patterns.

FEEDBACK:

* Be sure that several examples are read aloud. Do all of them if time allows.

* Recognize that there is no wrong or right in this exercise--only more detailed and less detailed.

* Recognize that no person can think of everything at all times--try to answer the question, "What is the most important thought that this character have in mind at this very time in the play?"

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Read the scene aloud with student volunteers playing the needed parts. Select particularly rich inner thought exercises to be read following each line of the dialogue. (My line/my thought; your line/your thought, repeating the pattern for each line of dialogue.)

* Try doing the scene only with the inner thoughts being spoken aloud. Have the volunteer characters pantomime their way through the scene paying close attention to the thoughts that are being read aloud by other volunteers.

CONCEPT: Enhancing the understanding by improvising scenes which don't actually occur on stage.

OBJECTIVES:

* Helping the student understand the story and the characters more completely.
* Helping the student realize how a playwright makes choices about which scenes will actually be played and which will only be mentioned.
* Underlining the notion that a play is merely a "blueprint" for performance--that there is much room for interpretation.

MATERIALS:

* A play which all have read

PROCEDURES:

* Go through the script from beginning to end and select those events or scenes which are only mentioned but do not actually take place on stage. These scenes might have happened many years prior to the play's time or may have occurred only seconds ago in another room of the house. Have students improvise these scenes after discussing the basics that make up that particular scene.
* Discuss what was learned by such improvisation. (Do you better understand the characters and what they feel? Is the story clearer now that you have some understanding of what might have happened in these other scenes?)

FEEDBACK:

* Repeat several of the scenes allowing students to present their own viewpoints of how the off stage scene might have gone. Allow students to argue over which improvised version most accurately reveals the intent of the playwright.
* Discuss why it is important for theatre artists to investigate these off stage scenes.
* Discuss how this investigation might enrich a production of this script.

* Recognize both the similarities and differences from student to student. Have students discuss why they made the choices that they did.

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Rewrite a play including several of the improvised scenes while cutting several of the scenes that do appear in the script. Discuss how this changes the meaning and themes of the work. Discuss the author's motivations for including certain scenes and not others.

CONCEPT: Asking questions that you wish the playwright would answer.

OBJECTIVES:

* Developing a critical mind for dramatic literature.
* Learning to question an author's purpose.
* Developing an inquisitive nature toward the purpose of writing.
* Learning to express questions concerning literature.

MATERIALS:

* None

PROCEDURES:

* After reading a play have the students compose a letter to the author in which they express their own critical perceptions of the play.
* Include in the letter any questions the students might have about what the playwright really intended.
* Students might wish to ask such questions as to what the playwright felt happened after the ending in the script. (Did they live happily ever after?)
* Share letters in class (it is quite possible to omit the writer's name) and see how many students shared similar criticisms or concerns.
* Discuss the issues raised by the letters.

FEEDBACK:

* Frequently students are afraid to express questions or criticisms about reading material. The letter allows them to put into writing their feelings without as much fear as a normal class discussion might cause.
* Encourage students to ask as many questions as they want. A large number of questions does not necessarily mean the student did not comprehend the reading! Sometimes the more we study a piece of literature the more questions we seem to have.

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Hand the letters back to someone different and have that student try to write a response to the questions and criticisms raised.

* Share the response letters during a class discussion.

* If the students are indeed dealing with a playwright that is still living, they may wish to write a collective letter and actually mail it to the playwright.

UNIT II

THEATRE HISTORY

Specific Goals and Objectives

While the study of theatre history in either junior high or high school would at best be very surface in its nature, even a very beginning understanding of this area may serve the following goals:

- increasing a student's appreciation of history by better understanding how society's artists responded to its own times

  --learning that even history has been affected by those who wrote about it--that we must be careful in evaluating the difference between "truth" and "fiction"

  --learning that theatre (and the other arts) have frequently commented upon its own society much to the chagrin of that time's leaders

  --helping a student to understand that theatre has played an important role in the sharing of information both laudatory and condemnatory about any given society

- helping the student to understand how society has viewed the theatre (from its religious roots in Ancient Greece to its total banning in various times in various countries)

  --learning about the role of theatre in different societies helps us understand theatre's incredible power

  --learning about the role of theatre in different societies helps us understand why it has been alternately banned and praised by various societies

  --learning about theatre in other times and places helps the student understand why theatre still plays an important role in today's society

- helping the student to learn how theatre customs and conventions have come into popular use, and why the audience expects and accepts those conventions

  --learning about theatre and its practices helps students understand why it works the way it does

  --learning about theatre practices alleviates some of the fear and misunderstanding many people have towards the theatre event

- helping the student to learn about various trends in theatre and drama that are a direct reflection of other sociological or religious events in history (for example: early realism as a reflection of Darwinism)

--relating theatre and drama to the time in which it was written, or in which the action is set, allows the student to make connections in major historical trends and events

--helping the student understand the connections of all historical events and the related artistic trends adds a sense of humanity to the study of history

Learner Outcomes and Evaluation Techniques

Again, many of the traditional techniques of student evaluation will work in this area as teachers assess students' work in such areas as discussion, written essays, oral reports, and objective testing.

It is highly encouraged, however, that teachers look not to the study, retention, or testing of factual information in this unit of study, but that they use this unit to encourage a student's curiosity and personal interests in the pursuit of overall pictures. The memorization of facts, names, places and events is much less important than the understanding of overall trends.

A unit of study in theatre history should foster in the student a desire to explore all of history in a more humanistic vein. Students should seek to explore certain topics or time periods of their choice, developing an inquisitiveness, rather than a dread over what they think the teacher wants them to memorize for a test.

Students should gain from this unit a respect for the art of theatre and its role in the lives of all people through all time.

Teacher's Self-Assessment

Following a unit of study focusing on theatre history, a teacher should ask the following self-directed questions:

1. Did students understand the purpose of this unit of study?
2. Did I provide enough time for this unit?
3. How well did I relate this study to the students' other classes?
4. Did I allow students to explore their own interests?
5. Did I encourage creative and imaginative research and projects?
6. Did I place the emphasis on ideas, trends, and people, or did the unit of study get bogged down in facts, times, and places?
7. What could I do to make this unit of study work better in future attempts?

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CONCEPT: Recording the everyday life of the character. Drawing in the politics, science, sociology of other times.

OBJECTIVES:

* Helping the student see characters as complete human beings.
* Using historical research as a tool for creative work.

MATERIALS:

* Knowledge of a character within a play
* Library resources for historical research

PROCEDURES:

* Read and discuss a historical play such as Romeo and Juliet or Oedipus Rex. Have students write a short biography of a character from the play, including not only the important events in the script in their biographies, but having them develop other events pertinent to the time in which the character lived. Allow time for research into such areas as science, sociology, religion and politics of that time period and place.
* Share biographies with the rest of the class.
* A real benefit may be found in enlisting the aid of history teachers and their students to divide the task of research and present those efforts in short class reports.

FEEDBACK:

* The word "biography" should not scare the students away from this assignment. A short biography hitting the main highlights of a life is certainly sufficient.
* Encourage students to do as much research as possible in preparation for writing the biography. Support those students who have been able to work major historical events into their biographies.

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Instead of writing a biography, the student might choose to do a week's worth of diary entries which focus on major events as well as day-to-day life. Research for this area might focus more on how people lived in that time period (the foods they ate, the clothes they wore, the type of work they did, etc.).

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Instead of having a formal moderator the scene could be developed merely as a chance meeting or as a formal dinner. Certainly more than two viewpoints can be worked into the talk show or formal dinner setting. For classes that have studied several plays and playwrights a regular round-table discussion might occur.

* Videotape the scenes and save for later classes. For well-prepared and scripted scenes the teacher might elect to use the experience as part of the unit on elements of performance--working with the scene in the areas of acting, directing, playwriting, and even design.

CONCEPT: Understanding theatre conventions and architecture of other times.

OBJECTIVES:

* Continued development of research skills.
* Learning about various theatre arrangements, sizes, scenographic abilities.
* Comparing theatre practices of today with other times.

MATERIALS:

* Model building materials (balsa wood, matt knives, glue, paint)

PROCEDURES:

* Break the class into three or four small groups (3-6 in each group) and ask them to research a specific time period and theatre buildings that were predominantly in use at that time (Ancient Greece or Rome, Japanese Kabuki Theatre, Shakespearian, Early Realism).
* After researching the theatre buildings of that time ask the group to construct a very simple model of that theatre style focusing especially on the actor/audience relationship.
* When models are complete have each group present the model along with a report on the research they did.
* Discuss the various theatrical settings of today that still make use of the basic principles of each of the ancient models.

FEEDBACK:

* This exercise will require careful supervision and more assistance than many of the other activities. It will also require more time.
* Teachers may wish to have a designer or art teacher cover the basic elements of model making.
* Teachers may also wish to have some of the research already done so that the activity focuses more on the actual reading and building, rather than on additional library time.

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Students may also wish to include in their models some sort of representation of the scenic devices that were used in that theatre (the Greek *periaktoi*, the magnificent water battles of the Romans, the trap doors of Shakespeare, etc.).

* Examples of lighting used in various theatres might also be studied and included in the model or in the report.

UNIT III

THEATRE THEORY

Specific Goals and Objectives

The study of theatre theory should achieve some or all of the following goals:

- helping the student understand the importance of theatre in our lives

  --learning why theatre exists even in this day of film and television

  --learning why people choose to go to the theatre

- helping the student understand the communication process that occurs during the theatre event

  --comparing the communication process of theatre to other recognized models of interpersonal and small group communication

  --comparing the role of an audience in theatre to the role an audience plays in other art forms

- helping the student understand the unique nature of theatre--what makes it a separate art form

  --learning how theatre draws upon the other art forms

  --learning how theatre differs distinctly from the other art forms

Learner Outcomes and Evaluation Techniques

Activities in this area will focus primarily on practical experiences and discussions within the classroom and in conjunction with the viewing of productions both live and filmed. Evaluation will certainly be centered on a students willingness to participate in those discussions and their ability to formulate understandable concepts about the nature of theatre.

When participatory exercises are used to explore concepts in this area the teacher should learn to recognize, and subsequently reward, both those who are willing to participate in the exercise and those who are most perceptive in analyzing the nature and results of that exercise.

Ideally, a student will discover during this unit of study how theatre works on a conceptual basis--what its necessary elements are and how they work together in a unique fashion; what makes it unique among the arts; and how it has drawn upon all of the other art forms yet has no distinct element of its own.

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Teacher's Self-Assessment

Following a unit of study focusing on theatre theory a teacher should ask the following self-directed questions:

1. Did students understand the purpose of this unit of study?

2. Did I provide enough time for this unit?

3. Were the exercises and activities appropriate for learning this topic? Would I use them again?

4. Was I able to use resources such as films, handouts, and live performances effectively in covering this topic?

5. Are students able to comprehend this subject? Are there ways I can make it more easily understood?

6. Did we as a class keep a balance between talking and actually doing things that would assist in understanding the concept?

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CONCEPT: Using the journal/diary format to respond to theatre techniques, conventions, and formats in nontheatre activities.

OBJECTIVES:

* To have students recognize theatre conventions and necessities.
* To have students recognize similarities between theatre and sport, theatre and religion, theatre and public speaking, theatre and interpersonal discussions and situations, theatre and other fine arts performances and displays.
* To have students recognize the major differences between theatre and other public activities.

MATERIALS:

* Notebook or diary

PROCEDURES:

* Discuss in class what elements of theatre are essentials (absolutely must have to make theatre: actors, audience, space, live performance) and what elements have come to be regarded as conventions (expected and accepted by the audience: costumes, makeup, scenery, lighting, script, typical theatre space, etc.).
* Have students keep a daily or weekly journal asking them to note the use of theatre essentials and conventions in nontheatre activities (preferably observed activities) such as football or hockey games (comparing theatre to "professional" wrestling may provide interesting results), religious services (both weekly and special events such as funerals, baptisms, weddings, etc.), lectures, music concerts, television watching, going to the movies, an argument in the hall, children on the playground or any other event that they feel has theatrical elements.
* Encourage them to note in what ways the observed event is similar to and different from a theatre performance.
* Ask them to define what makes theatre a unique form based on these observations (either in the journal or in class).

FEEDBACK:

* Ask for journals to be handed in on a regular basis (perhaps every two weeks) so that you can encourage certain types of observation or ask that students develop their responses.

* Discuss in class, once a week, common themes or topics that appear in the journals.

* Encourage students to observe activities other than those assigned.

* Encourage students to allow their personal point of view to develop in responding to the observed activities.

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Journal may also be used for students to respond to in class lectures.

* Journal may also be used for students to respond to any and all performances that are seen (both theatre and other forms).

* Instead of doing as a journal activity, teachers may elect to keep this activity as an in-class discussion topic extending over several periods (using one day to compare theatre and sport, another for theatre and religion, another for theatre and other nonscripted art forms, another for theatre and movies/television, etc.).

CONCEPT: Understanding the concept of group psychology or the "social contagion theory."

OBJECTIVES:

* Sensing the difference between watching something alone and responding as a group.

* Learning about the importance of group response during a communal event.

MATERIALS:

* Half hour videotape of a television situation comedy

PROCEDURES:

* Have the class watch a television situation comedy together during one class period (the sillier the show the better).

* Immediately following, discuss the types of responses the students had during the viewing.

FEEDBACK:

* Discussion needs to focus on the audience's behavior during the viewing--what different behaviors did watching as a group elicit? how were those behaviors different from watching such a show by oneself at home? did students ever laugh because of the laughter of others? were responses different or just more extreme and elongated than when at home alone?

* Ask students to share their thoughts as they watched the program. Were they surprised by the amount of laughter? Did they find themselves aware of the other people's responses? Did they catch more of the comedy because other people found it funny?

CONCEPT: Looking at an audience's behavior: learning about the ways an audience works.

OBJECTIVES:

* Learning about the various ways an audience can respond.
* Learning to distinguish between the types of behavior a performance can elicit.

MATERIALS:

* Videotape of audience, VCR, television

PROCEDURES:

* During a performance of a theatre event (or some other live performance) videotape the audience. It may even be possible to videotape the class at some time (without their knowledge) as they view a prepared acting scene.
* Show several minutes of the video to the whole class. You may need to repeat the showing to get students to really observe behaviors.
* Discuss the various behaviors of the audience as individuals and as a group.

FEEDBACK:

* Audience response can be broken into several levels including:

  cognitive: a thinking or pondering of what is occurring
  emotional: affecting you on an emotional level
  physical: actual physical reactions of the body
  aesthetic: very involved, totally wrapped up in the event
  social: aware of the nature of the event, aware of own role, not very involved in the event.

* Discussion should focus on these different types of responses and when they were observed in the tape.

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Discuss the purpose of the laugh track used by many television shows.

* Discuss the purpose of television shows having a live studio audience.

* If the videotape is of the class, have students respond to their own behaviors--have them talk about what they were feeling or doing during certain parts of the tape.

UNIT IV

ELEMENTS OF PERFORMANCE

Specific Goals and Objectives

The study of the various elements that go into making a performance should be approached both from participatory and observatory viewpoints, resulting in the student achieving the following various goals:

- achieving an understanding and appreciation for the nature of both the creative and interpretive artists who have input in making the theatre event

  --learning about the nature of collaboration

  --learning the function of each theatre artist

  --understanding the difference between the creative and interpretive artist

- learning, or learning <u>about</u>, the various skills needed by each of the various theatre artists

  --through observation and participation a student should come to understand how each theatre artist goes about his or her work

  --developing respect for the work of theatre artists

  --achieving minimal skills in one or more area

- learning to recognize value in the work of theatre artists

  --developing critical skills used in evaluating the work of theatre artists

Learner Outcomes and Evaluation Techniques

This area really includes two distinct levels or types of evaluation, yet a single overall outcome.

Following this unit of study a student should have learned about all of the various theatre artists and the different roles they play in putting together the theatre event. Learning will occur through both the vicarious and participatory experiences, yet the emphasis of learning should never be on career development through the acquisition of skills, nor should evaluation at any time be concerned with the relative theatrical ability or skills levels actually achieved through participation.

What is important is that students learn by participating, especially when they seek to explore those roles most challenging to them, or most unlike skills they already possess.

Evaluation in this area can certainly focus on such subjective categories as the students ability to recognize the various roles and skills needed for each role. As such skills are isolated a student can also be evaluated on their ability to perceive the use of such skills in others.

When a teacher chooses to evaluate the participation of a student and the quality of their work as they attempt to take on the role of one of the various artists, the following guidelines should assist the teacher in making fair and reasonable evaluations:

Did the students willingly take risks--extending themselves?

Did the students respect the other students in their attempts?

Did the students solve problems imaginatively?

Did the students explore all their artistic options, or did they settle too early into simple solutions?

Did the students listen to constructive criticism and attempt to incorporate that criticism into their work?

Did the students cope with their failures as graciously as with their successes?

Did the students act responsibly and with strong self-discipline?

Did the students work productively with the other members of the class? or with those whom they were assigned to work?

Did the students offer constructive criticism to others?

Teacher's Self-Assessment

Following a unit of study focusing on elements of performance, a teacher should ask the following self-directed questions:

1. Did students understand the purpose of this unit of study?
2. Did I provide enough time for this unit?
3. Did I tailor the activities to fit this group of students?
4. Did I encourage students to explore areas which they were both curious about, and about which they did not already possess skills?
5. Did I allow students to make their own mistakes or poor choices, then actually help them learn from those mistakes?
6. Did I encourage students to make creative and imaginative choices?
7. Did I continually remind myself and the students that the skills we explored and the projects we tackled were for the benefit of learning about theatre artists, rather than learning to become theatre artists?

8. Did I find an effective balance between practical experiences and more traditional classroom exercises in exploring each of the topics in this area?

9. Do I need more resources to effectively teach in this area? How can I go about getting those resources?

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CONCEPT: Learning to pursue a character's goal.

OBJECTIVES:

* Learning about the skills needed by an actor.
* Learning the elements of good theatrical conflict.
* Alleviating self-consciousness.

MATERIALS:

* None needed

PROCEDURES:

* Using several volunteers at one time have them come to the front of the room and stand. Allow them to stand without any further command for about a minute, then ask them to mentally record the feelings they had during that time.
* Next, have them reach for the ceiling alternating arms. Allow them to reach for another minute or two. Again, ask them to register their thoughts for that time period.
* Ask them to imagine something valuable dangling from the ceiling--money, tickets to a rock concert, jewels, etc. Allow the reaching to continue for another two or three minutes. Again, ask them to mentally record their thoughts for this time period.
* Finally ask them to imagine that while that valuable item still dangles from the ceiling they are literally treading on thin ice and any action that is too violent will cause them to fall through. Allow a few more minutes for this step of the exercise.
* Following this final phase discuss with the participants and observers what occurred in each phase and what feelings both the participants and observers had during each phase.
* Define the second phase as mere activity, the third phase striving for a goal, and the fourth phase as striving for a goal with a major obstacle in the way.
* Discuss how each of these items--activity, goals, and obstacles are found in various scenes which have already been read.

* Discuss how each of these items can be found in real life at any moment (as in the classroom situation where the teacher lectures (activity) to teach students (goal) who are rather tired or bored (obstacle).

FEEDBACK:

* Sidecoach the actors to really pursue the goal. Look for various tactics to achieve the goal.

* Sidecoach the actors reminding them of the obstacle.

* Discourage criticism of performance values. This is an exercise to learn about acting, not a performance.

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Repeat the exercise with two volunteers--giving each one a similar goal (to crack the safe, to find the keys, etc.) Discuss how this differs from a scene where actors have opposing goals (to get away, to keep confined).

* Change the obstacles or add more obstacles to any of the exercises above. Discuss how this alters the scene and its basic meaning. What happens when several obstacles are piled on top of each other? When does it become comical watching the actors become overwhelmed by obstacles?

CONCEPT: Repeating a performance. Playing each time as if it were the first time.

OBJECTIVES:

* Learning about the skills needed by an actor.
* Learning to play the moment as if it were the first time.
* Learning to recognize the difference between actual behaviors and overacting.
* Developing critical skills in evaluating acting.

MATERIALS:

* $1 bill

PROCEDURES:

* Using several volunteers have them leave the room. Hide a $1 bill within the room (not on a person) where the group is certain to find it but only after really searching for it. Put the remaining students in one corner of the room where they can observe the volunteers.
* Have the volunteers return and explain that whoever finds the money can have it (also explain that the money is not hidden on any person).
* When the search is completed, explain that you are going to "hide" it again in the very same place and that you want the volunteers to repeat their actions as if it were the very first time. Have them leave the room and reenter as if it were the first time they were doing the search. Encourage the observers to take notes on the volunteers' behaviors.
* When the exercise is completed discuss the major differences between the first and second searches.
* Discuss what this has to do with the process an actor must go through.
* Discuss the types of feelings the observers had as they watched the scene develop. (Why were they nearly giggling throughout the first search and hardly responding during the second? What has changed? Why can they go see a movie more than once when they now know the ending? How do good actors make each moment seem to come alive for the very first time?)

* Repeat the entire exercise with the same or different volunteers as time permits.

FEEDBACK:

* Look for major mistakes during the second search (shortening of patterns, not really looking, overdoing/showing the audience, leaving out thinking time, a lack of suspense or irritation built up during the search, leaving out the climactic moment of finding it and getting to keep it, etc.).

* A second or third time through the exercise will produce even better discussion (and much improved "acting") for the most part. Here is when discussion centering on audience feelings will have the most weight.

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Repeat having the volunteers imagine that the $1 is $1 million. How does behavior change as the stakes go up?

* Repeat having only one student go at a time, giving them a very short time limit. How does this obstacle change behavior?

CONCEPT: The director tells a story by creating pictures that describe relationships.

OBJECTIVES:

* Learning about one function of the director--the creation of pictures.
* Seeing how spatial relationships suggest character and conflict.
* Developing an ability to see human beings in relation to each other.

MATERIALS:

* None

PROCEDURES:

* Alternating students frequently, have one student serve as the director and two others as the potential statue.
* Have the director erect a statue by placing the two volunteers in any position desired.
* The final position should suggest a specific relationship or conflict that the "director" had in mind.
* Observers should allow the director to finish before trying to guess the meaning of the statue.
* Students who are serving as the statue should also be given a chance to respond to what they felt their relationship was.

FEEDBACK:

* Talk about the role of director in making us see the story, the conflict, the characters, the relationships, etc.
* Allow the director time to experiment with the volunteers. He or she may need to work through several options before settling in on a primary choice.
* Discuss how the work of a movie director differs from that of a stage director (what role does the camera play in deciding what the audience sees?).

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Add costumes, properties and furniture to the exercise and allow the director to embellish the story being told by his or her statues.

* Add one or more "statues" to the activity.

CONCEPT: Developing character from clothing then reversing the process.

OBJECTIVES:

* Learning how design is about making choices.
* Learning how character is reflected through costume.
* Learning how costumes help define character.

MATERIALS:

* A collection of old and odd clothing, hats, shoes, umbrellas, etc.

PROCEDURES:

* Have a student or small group of students select from the collection of clothing any number of items that they want and have them put them on.
* Allow the student to slowly become the character that he or she feels is suggested by the costume.
* Students who are observing may also make suggestions about what type of person they think that particular set of clothing would belong to.
* Continue the character development by suggesting when and where that character would wear the clothes.
* Ask two or more students to interact based on the characters that have been suggested by the costumes.
* Reverse the process by selecting or developing a character and then finding the appropriate clothes to fit the chosen character, again ask that one or more characters interact in their new characters.
* Discuss the role of costume in determining character.

FEEDBACK:

* Discussions might lead to asking why students selected the clothing they have on that day--What choices or situations led them to buy the clothing in the first place? Why did they choose to wear that outfit today? Did their emotional state have anything to do with their choices?

UNIT V

THEATRE APPRECIATION

Specific Goals and Objectives

The study of audience skills and audience appreciation should focus on the some of the following skills:

- the development of "taste"--learning to discern, appreciate, and enjoy a variety of styles of theatre performances

  --seeing and discussing a variety of live and filmed theatre events

  --developing one's own interest in seeing theatre

  --widening one's interest in the types of performances seen and enjoyed

- learning about the nature of live performance and the dynamics of communication during the live event

  --developing an understanding of group psychology

  --understanding the role of the audience in live performances

- the development of a personal point of view--learning to look and appreciate from one's own perspective

  --learning to trust one's own opinion

  --developing supportive arguments for one's opinion

  --learning to respect other's opinions

  --understanding the role of criticism in the artistic process

- the development of an awareness of aesthetics in theatre

  --learning to isolate problems and successes in a theatre event

  --learning to compare theatrical events

Learner Outcomes and Evaluation Techniques

Providing the student with a large number of observable performances is key to making this unit of study valuable. Appreciation can only grow when the student has had several opportunities to witness theatre and share responses in a variety of ways.

Students should learn to develop their own viewpoints on the quality of work seen while respecting the viewpoints of others. They should learn to support their feelings, and those feelings should far surpass the simple responses of "I liked it," or "I didn't like it."

Evaluation in this area should focus on helping students to formulate their opinions and encouraging them to develop strong supportive statements for those opinions.

Teachers should take care not to voice their own opinions until after all students have had a chance to formulate opinions of their own. Teachers must be careful to recognize that students who do not share the same opinion with the teacher may in fact be deserving of the highest praise. While in a math course it is expected that we will all come to the same answer, in theatre appreciation we will each have our own opinion and the value of the students' work comes in how well they express and support that opinion.

Teacher's Self-Assessment

Following a unit of study focusing on theatre appreciation, a teacher should ask the following self-directed questions:

1. Did students understand the purpose of this unit of study?

2. Did I provide enough time for this unit?

3. Was I capable of finding enough live and filmed performances that could be seen by all of the students?

4. Did I allow discussions to develop based on what the students saw as most important in their experiences?

5. Did students eventually feel free to talk about their perceptions in the classroom?

6. Was I careful to allow each student a chance to express his or her opinion? Did I make an effort to make sure that students did eventually express their perceptions during discussions?

7. Did I work with all students in helping them to develop and support their own opinions?

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See also Bibliography for Unit III: Theatre Theory

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CONCEPT: The building of suspense.

OBJECTIVES:

* Recognizing audience reaction.
* Learning to play the given circumstances.
* Heightening sensory awareness.

MATERIALS:

* Rolled up newspaper, two blindfolds, a "precious object"

PROCEDURES:

* Two volunteers are selected; one to play the thief and one to play the guard.
* A large "room" is established by using desks or chairs to build walls to the room.
* The guard's job is to protect the "jewel" in the middle of the room, using the rolled up newspaper as a weapon; the thief must attempt to steal it without being touched or hit by the newspaper; ask both players to imagine that the room has just been plunged into total darkness.
* Ask the volunteers to play the scene given the above groundrules. Ask the rest of the students to observe their behaviors closely. Ask them also to monitor their own reactions to the scene.
* Immediately following the first playing of the scene, blindfold both volunteers and ask them to play the scene again. Ask the rest of the students to again observe both the players and themselves during this scene.
* Discuss the major differences between the two portrayals. Focus especially on the feelings of the audience as they watched the scene.
* Repeat the scene a third time, this time without the blindfolds, asking the players to try to incorporate some of what they learned from their fellow classmates and from doing the scene blindfolded. Again, ask the students watching to observe themselves and the players carefully.

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* Repeat the discussion process

* Repeat the entire activity with a new set of volunteers

FEEDBACK:

* Make sure there is plenty of space for the two players to move about in.

* Ask that the students be aware of their own breathing in relation to the breathing of the players.

* Encourage the players to make use of their other senses.

CONCEPT: Recognizing that each of us view different events in a different manner.

OBJECTIVES:

* To have students weigh their own powers of perception.
* To have students recognize that each person sees an event in a way that may or may not be similar to another's point of view.
* To encourage students to develop perceptive powers while respecting the perceptions of others.

MATERIALS:

* Half sheets of paper

PROCEDURES:

* Have principal or other person in school interrupt class and stage an argument with teacher. Should be no longer than two or three minutes and contain statements of accusation from both parties, mention of other arguments or tense situations that have occurred, and threats of reprisal from both parties.
* Teacher should ask students to write down immediately their own account of what just happened (as a supposed means of protecting the teacher) and hand them in (no names on those sheets).
* Conspirator should return to class; both teacher and conspirator should explain that fight was staged.
* Several responses to fight should be read aloud.
* Discuss for rest of the period how persons perceived the fight based on their loyalties to one or the other of the fighters. Discuss how it is possible for two audience members to come away with such a different perception of the "performance." Discuss other ways that perceptions were vastly different. Discuss/Attempt to define "point of view" based on this exercise.

FEEDBACK:

* Have students respond in journal or in short paper what they learned from the experience in class.

* Encourage differences of opinion; celebrate the differences rather than stifling them (especially as they relate to the arts; criminal matters are another matter!).

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Talk about point of view as it relates to other art forms (especially a good topic when it comes to parents' choice of music vs. teenagers' choice of music).

* Have students find two newspaper reviews of a movie, theatre performance, or concert which differ vastly. Students might do a comparison of two movie critics who appear on TV and whose opinions differ greatly. If it is possible, have the students see that event and compare their own response to that of the critics'. Is it possible to have such vastly different opinions? What allows for such differences?

CONCEPT: Learning about group psychology and how it relates to theatre through observation.

OBJECTIVES:

* To have students recognize the differences inherent in group response and individual response.
* To have students recognize the importance of the live communal event.

MATERIALS:

* None

PROCEDURES:

* Have students observe an acting scene or monologue (preferably a comedy scene or monologue) in a large performance space.
* Have students sit as far apart from each other as possible.
* Darken the auditorium so that only the actor or actors are lighted.
* Repeat the experience with either the same or a different monologue or scene, this time with all students seated very close to each other.
* Discuss the differences in the audience's responses to the scene.

FEEDBACK:

* Relate to similar experiences (telling a joke to one person or telling the same joke to a large group; watching television sit-com by oneself or with a large group; watching a sure-to-make-you-cry movie by oneself or in a very full, large movie theatre; etc.).
* Have students write a short response paper to the experience describing the difference in their own response to the activity.

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Have one or several students do a report on "mob" or group psychology--investigating the concept and reporting to the rest of the class on its relevance to theatre audiences.

* Discuss why theatres use reserved seating policies while movie theatres don't. Include in the discussion the students' personal preferences in seating selection for different events. Observe an audience as it arrives for a movie; listen to people's arguments over where they prefer to sit.

UNIT VI

SELF

Specific Goals and Objectives

Drawing upon those goals introduced in the K-6 drama curriculum guide, the study of theatre in grades 7-12 should continue to assist in achieving the following goals:

- the development of a positive self-image

  --(while keeping that self-image realistic)

- the extension of physical and vocal abilities

  --learning to express oneself as completely as possible

  --developing communication skills

- the application of creative thinking to problem-solving situations

  --learning to seek unique solutions rather than easiest solutions

  --learning to evaluate possibilities in the search for the best solution

- the use of group communication and problem-solving skills

  --learning about collaboration, brainstorming and compromise

  --learning to work as both leader and team member

- the development of a positive nature toward new challenges and projects that require a student to take risks

  --learning to fail gracefully

  --learning to grow from failures, rather than withdraw for fear of failure

- the demonstration of respect for others' choices, points-of-view, and unique approaches to the challenges set forth

  --developing respect for others

- the ability to take and give constructive criticism

Learner Outcomes and Evaluation Techniques

This area is quite simply the most difficult to assess as it calls upon the teacher to make assessments of nearly immeasurable qualities. The guidelines listed in the section on Elements of Performance along with

the following may assist the teacher in making fair judgments of the student's growth:

Has the student made an honest effort to explore the subject?

Has the student made an honest effort to take reasonable risks?

Does the student display a sense of trust when working with others?

Does the student make effective use of time?

Does the student show an ability to work with abstract and artistic concepts?

Have the students shown signs of developing confidence in themselves? in their own work?

Is the student capable of working without strict supervision?

Does the student seek extra challenges?

Does the student seek criticism?

Does the student approach each discussion or project with vigor?

Evaluation of students should occur on a frequent basis utilizing concrete examples of their behavior to explain your assessment of their current work and your expectations of their future work.

With older students it may be possible to also utilize self-evaluation as a tool in this particular area. Journal entries or self-evaluation forms may be asked of each student on a regular basis or following each project that merits such an evaluation. The above guidelines should be shared with the students so they have an idea by what standards they are being evaluated.

Teacher's Self-Assessment

Following a unit of study focusing on self, a teacher should ask the following self-directed questions:

1. Did students understand the purpose of this unit of study?
2. Did I provide enough time for this unit?
3. Were the activities I selected to use appropriate for this age group? For this size of group?
4. Did I find an effective way of evaluating and sharing that evaluation with each student?
5. Is this group of students supportive of each other? Are they critical of each other? Are they too critical of each other?

6. Was I capable of challenging each student?

7. Did I remember to reward responsible risk-taking?

8. Were activities open-ended enough to allow for several possible solutions? Did I encourage the search for more than one solution?

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CONCEPT: Creative movement and shapes.

OBJECTIVES:

* Thinking of creative solutions quickly.
* Using tools of observation.
* Stretching vocal and physical abilities.

MATERIALS:

* None

PROCEDURES:

* Ask students to observe an animal (over a weekend or longer, if needed).
* Ask that they observe carefully the physical and vocal qualities of that animal (and the personality that each animal seems to have).
* Students should practice becoming that animal as closely as possible, taking on the physical, vocal and personality trails as fully as they can.
* When students are prepared the teacher should have them sit in a circle.
* One student begins the exercise by "performing" his or her animal in the middle of the circle. Once the character of that animal has been firmly established the student should focus on one of the other students (staying in character all the time) and move up to that person. The selected student should do his or her best to imitate the traits of the first person. When the second person seems to have all the traits learned he or she should move to the center of the circle and the first person should move to the perimeter now dropping the animal character.

* The second person now begins a slow transformation from the first person's animal to his or her own. Voice and movement should very slowly evolve from one animal to the other. Emphasis should be placed on the middle ground where a total hybrid, nonrealistic animal exists. When the transformation is complete, the process continues with the second person selecting another student from the perimeter to take his or her place.

FEEDBACK:

* This can be a difficult exercise requiring patience on the teacher's part and will probably require that the students receive sidecoaching so that they keep the transformation a slow and methodical process.

* Encourage the students to do thorough research and observation. Remember: a dog is not a dog is not a dog. All students could select a dog as their role model and still make the transformation activity an interesting one.

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* This activity can be repeated several times as long as students select a different person from the perimeter to go through the transformation.

CONCEPT: Creative movement and shapes.

OBJECTIVES:

* Thinking of creative solutions quickly.
* Making use of space and self creatively.
* Observing others' solutions; using others' ideas as springboard for new ideas.

MATERIALS:

* A chair

PROCEDURES:

* Have students line up and one at a time proceed to a chair in the middle of the room and sit.
* The following student must then sit in the chair in a different manner.
* The following student must use yet another manner of sitting.
* The group must watch all others for two purposes:
  --to make sure they don't accidentally repeat someone else's form of sitting;
  --to serve as judges of each other so that if duplication occurs the group can vote to eliminate that person from the competition.
* The game continues until a single person is left.

FEEDBACK:

* The game is a simple one requiring only that the teacher serve as final judge should the group not be able to reach a consensus during its judging role.

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Repeat with a different piece of furniture.

* Repeat with the object being to enter the room differently than anyone else.

* Repeat with the goal being merely to cross from one side of the room to the other in a different manner from other students (somersaults, cartwheels, crabwalks, moonwalks, and all the other crazy ways we have of moving . . .).

CONCEPT: Learning about human relationships from improvised situations.

OBJECTIVES:

* Recognizing human relationships through physical cues.
* Developing improvisational skills.
* Allowing students to quickly assume vocal and physical characteristics while attempting to find the immediate conflict.
* Collaboration of observers and participants--immediate feedback and continual communication.

MATERIALS:

* None

PROCEDURES:

* With two volunteers (can rotate frequently) have them come in front of the class. Ask that they always keep eye contact strong throughout the exercise.
* Each time you clap your hands the volunteers should jump into a totally new position (no time to think just jump).
* Demand that they really explore space (but they should keep eye contact with the partner).
* When both have jumped into a new position they should freeze there.
* Observers should look at the statues created and shout out quickly any scene or relationship suggested by the forms.
* Statues should quickly attempt to act out the scene suggested by the audience.
* If no scene is suggested within a few seconds, teacher should clap hands again and volunteers should move on to a new position.
* Rotate students frequently to keep the activity alive with new energy.

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* When a scene is played allow it to continue only as long as seems necessary to get a sense of character, relationship, and conflict across.

* Save the discussion for later. Just do it!

FEEDBACK:

* Some students will take to this activity quickly. Others will need much sidecoaching to explore their physical space and to leap into the suggested characters.

* The activity is really designed to force people to think and respond quickly so be sure to keep the activity moving along at a quick pace. Think less and do more!

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* A game of tag where the person who is "it" assumes a new sound and motion immediately upon being tagged (while all the others must copy "its" style) can be a good warm-up for this activity.

CONCEPT: Learning how we use the concepts of acting in our everyday lives.

OBJECTIVES:

* Learning to observe behavior.
* Learning to record that behavior.
* Learning to analyze our own behavior.
* Relating our daily "performances" to the "performance" of character.

MATERIALS:

* None

PROCEDURES:

* "Over the next two days, observe yourself as you move from situation to situation; notice how you perform for different audiences, including such specifics as your bodily posture, your quality of voice and choice of language, your own sense of size, weight, attractiveness, and the ways in which you project an image of yourself to others. At natural breaks in your activities, you might jot down your observations in a notebook.
* Each evening when you are alone review the experiences of the day; act out the most dramatic changes you observed in yourself; recall other times in your life when you experienced yourself in a very different way than usual and try to recreate them as well."[1]

FEEDBACK:

* Have students share their experiences in class discussion or in journals which are handed in. Encourage discussion. Ask the students about how self-conscious they felt at times.

[1]Adapted from The Actor at Work by Robert Benedetti, p. 7.

* Ask about those times when they most realized they really were "acting" for the benefit of others.

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

* Have some of the students reenact some of their life moments for the benefit of the class.

* Continue the exercise for some time. Holidays or special events might present situations that bring out much more clear pictures of "acting" in real life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

THEATRE ORGANIZATIONS

Colleges and Universities

North Dakota State
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Theatre Department
North 6th St
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Theatre Department
Valley City, ND 58072

Jamestown College
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Jamestown, ND 58401

Dickinson State University
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Dickinson, ND 58601

North Dakota State University
Theatre Department, Box 5462
Fargo, ND 58105

Minot State University
Theatre Department
Minot, ND 58702

University of North Dakota
Department of Theatre Arts, Box 8182
Grand Forks, ND 58202

Community Theatres

Arts and Community Theatre
Box 28
Ellendale, ND 58436

Bottineau Community Theatre
420 Main St
Bottineau, ND 58318

Cameo Players
Box 155
Noonan, ND 58765

Cavalier Community Theatre
Box 308
Cavalier, ND 58220

Dakota Stage Ltd.
412 E Main
Bismarck, ND 58501

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Box 744
Williston, ND 58801

Fargo/Moorhead Community Theatre
PO Box 644
Fargo, ND 58107

Grafton Community Theatre
131 Prospect Ave
Grafton, ND 58237

Greater Grand Forks Community Theatre
PO Box 895
Grand Forks, ND 58206

Hatton Community Theatre
Box 280
Hatton, ND 58240

Hazen Community Theatre
Box 468
Hazen, ND 58545

Lake Region Pioneer Players
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Devils Lake, ND 58301

LaMoure Summer Musical Theatre
Box 42
LaMoure, ND 58458

Little Country Theatre
Box 5462, NDSU
Fargo, ND 58105

Community Theatres (cont.)

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Mandan Optomists Club
401 6th Ave NW
Mandan, ND 58554

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Minot, ND 58702

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Music Theatre International
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311 Washington, PO Box 109
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Samuel French, Inc.
45 W 25th St
New York, NY 10010

Pioneer Drama Service
2172 S Colorado Blvd
PO Box 22555
Denver, CO 80222

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THEATRE PERUSAL SCRIPT INVENTORY

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Matilda Shouted Fire . . . . . Janet Green
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Sabrina Fair . . . . . Samuel Taylor
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Sorry, Wrong Number and The Hitchhiker . . . . . Lucille Fletcher

Star Spangled Girl, The . . . . . Neil Simon
Summer Brave . . . . . William Inge (final version of romantic comedy "Picnic")
Susan and God . . . . . Rachel Crothers
Three Short Plays (The Secret of Freedom, Air Raid, The Fall of the City) . . Archibald MacLeish
Towards Zero . . . . . Agatha Christie
Uninvited, The . . . . . Tim Kelly
War and Four Other Plays . . . . . Jean Claude Van Itallie
Where Has Tommie Flowers Gone . . . . . Terrance McNally
Women and Wallace (6) . . . . . Jonathan Marc Sherman
Zoo Story, The and The Sand Box (2) . . . . . Edward Albee

SAMUEL FRENCH INC.

12:21 P.M. . . . . F. J. Hartland (In OOBwy Fest 10th series)
21A . . . . . Kevin Kling (weirdness on a bus)
Abelard and Heloise . . . . . Ronald Millar
Afterwards . . . . . Geraldine McGaughan
Alchemist's Book, The . . . . . Kathy Hurley (children's play)
An Unpraised Season . . . . . Richard S. Dunlop (one act)
Any Number Can Die . . . . . Fred Carmichael
Boy Upstairs, The . . . . . Lucile Vaughan Payne (one act)
Cinderella (2) . . . . . Ruth Newton (children's play)
Daddy's Home . . . . . Ivan Menchell (In OOBwy Fest 11th series)
Delta Triangle . . . . . Stephan Schwab (In OOBwy Fest 10th series)
Dispatches From Hell . . . . . Melvin I. Cooperman (In OOBwy Fest 10th series)
Dreamjobs . . . . . Graham Jones (one act with British setting)
Edgar Lee Master's Spoon River Anthology (4) . . . . . Adapted by Charles Aidman
El Grande de Coca Cola . (Musical) R. House, J. Neville-Andrews, A. Sherman, D. White, S. Willis
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Knack, The . . . . . Ann Jellicoe
LaRonde . . . . . Arthur Schnitzler
Lovers and Other Strangers . . . . . Renee Taylor and Joseph Bologna
Mister Peepers . . . . . Marrijane Joseph Hayes
Molly and James . . . . . Shelia Walsh (In OOBwy Fest 10th series)
Moonchildren . . . . . Michael Weller
More From Story Theater . . . . . Paul Sills
Night Is My Enemy, The . . . . . Fred Carmichael
Not So Grim Fairy Tales . . . . . Patricia Montley (all female casts, 5 short scenes)
Of Poems, Youth and Spring . . . . . John Logan (one act)
Off-off Broadway Festival Plays 10th Series . . . . . Various Authors and Scripts
Off-off Broadway Festival Plays 11th Series . . . . . Various Authors and Scripts
One Man, One Woman . . . . . Robert Patrick (six one act plays)
Our Town . . . . . Thornton Wilder
P.S. Your Cat Is Dead . . . . . James Kirkwood (kinky but interesting full length play)
People! . . . . . John Patrick (3 one acts, good but not for teen actors)
Phoenix 55' . . . . . Ira Wallach (revue sketches, dated)
Plays for an Undressed Stage (It, Do, and Black and White) . . . . . Gary Apple
Psycho Beach Party . . . . . Charles Busch (trashy prody of beach movies)
Quick Tricks . . . . . James Reach (16 playlets for club or school, dated)
Rescenzio . . . . . Eddie DeSantis (In OOBwy Fest 11th series)
Richard Harding Bush or the Rococo Cocoa Bean . . . . . Cleve Haubold (children's one act)
Robert Patrick's Cheep Theatricks . . . . . Robert Patrick (collective of various scripts)
Senior Prom . . . . . Robert Mearns (In OOBwy Fest 10th series)
Story Theater . . . . . Adapted for the stage by Paul Sills

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Talking With . . . . . Jane Martin (interesting female monologues)
The World of Carl Sandberg . . . . . Norman Corwi
Thirty Modern Monologues . . . . . Roger Karshner
Ties That Bind, The . . . . . Matthew Witten (In OOBwy Fest 11th series)
Tom Sawyer's Treasure Hunt . . . . . Charlotte B. Chorpenning
Touching Bottom . . . . . Steve Tesich (3 interesting but dark one acts)
Twenty-Five Ten Minute Plays From Actor's Theatre of Louisville (4) . . . . . Various authors
U.S.A. (2) . . . . . Paul Shire and John Dos Passos
Vaneties . . . . . Jack Heifner
Voices . . . . . Susan Griffin (poetic monologues and choral readings)
White Liars and Black Comedy . . . . . Peter Shaffer (2 one acts)

SAMUEL FRENCH MUSICALS

Angel . . . (Musical) Libretto-Frings/Udell Music-Geld based on "Look Homeward Angel" by T. Wolfe
Festival (5) . . . . . (Musical) Music--Stephen Downs Lyrics--Downs and R. Martin
Gorey Stories . . . . . Stephan Currens adapted from stories by Edward Gorey Music--D. Aldrich
Grease . . . . . (Musical) Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey
Great American Backstage Musical, The . . . . (Musical) Book--Solly/Ward Music and Lyrics--Solly
Growing Up Naked (2) . . . . . (Musical) R. A. Barbie
Henry Sweet Henry . . . (Musical) Book--N. Johnson Songs--B. Merrill based on "World of Henry O."
How to Eat Like a Child . . . . . (Musical) Book--D. Ephron, J. Forster, J. Kahan Music--Forster
Human Comedy, The . . . (Musical) Music--G. MacDermot Libretto--W. Demarsq from story by Soroyan
Is There Life After High School . . . . (Musical) Book and Lyrics--J. Kindley Music--C. Carnelia
Little Shop of Horrors. . . . . (Musical) Book and Lyrics--H. Ashman Music--A. Menken
Preppies . . . . . (Musical) Book--David Taylor Music and Lyrics--Gary Portnoy
Really Rosie . . . . . (Musical) Book and Lyrics--Maurice Sendak Music--Carole King
Rocky Horror Show, The . . . . . (Musical) Book, Music, Lyrics--Richard O'Brien
Seventeen . . . . . (Musical) Book--S. Benson Lyrics--K. Gannon Music--W. Kent
Shenandoah . . . . . (Musical) Lyrics--P. Udell Music--G. Geld Book--J. Berrett
Shelter . . . . . (Musical) Book and Lyrics--Gretchen Cryer Music--Nancy Ford
Starmites . . . . . (Musical) Book--S. Ross and B. Keating Music and Lyrics--B. Keating
Tricks .(Musical) Music--J. Blatt Lyrics--L. Burstein Book--J. Jory based on "Scapin" by Moliere
Trixie True Teen Detective . . . . . (Musical) Book, Music and Lyrics--Kelly Hamilton
Whispers on the Wind (2) . . . . . (Musical) Book and Lyrics by John P. Kuntz Music--Lor Crane

MISCELLANEOUS PUBLISHERS

Monologues for Teenagers . . . . . Roger Karshner (monologues) Dramaline Publications
Scenes for Teenagers . . . . . Roger Karshner (short acting exercises) Dramaline Publications
Small Wooden Horse, A (4) . . . . . Ev Miller (one act) Pioneer Drama Service